



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Fire Management Branch
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
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February 14, 2008

To: Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8

From: Acting Chief, Fire Management Branch

Subject: 2008 FWS Fire Management Handbook Update

The FWS Fire Management Handbook has been updated for 2008 and attached for your use. The Fire Management Handbook is intended to be a program reference guide that documents the standards for operational procedures and practices for fire management activities in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These standards and practices are based on current Service, Departmental, and Interagency policy, and are intended to provide program guidance to ensure safe, efficient, and effective wildland fire operations.

The Handbook is formatted similarly to the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook](#) which should be familiar to all involved in fire management. To minimize duplication, the Handbook references, instead of restating, supplemental guidance in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook (NFES #2724) and other common sources.

Significant changes in the 2008 FWS Fire Management Handbook are described in the attached list. The FWS Fire Management Handbook will be updated annually in January to coincide with the annual update of the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook. Please contact your Region's representative on the FWS National Fire Operations and Safety Team if you have suggestions for improving the Handbook.

Attachments

2008 FWS Fire Management Handbook Update

Significant Changes in the 2008 Fire Management Handbook (FMH) include:

- **General Changes**
 - The FMH format was changed to clearly integrate the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook (Redbook) and the FWS FMH through reference.
 - Added a table of contents
 - Renumbered chapters to match with the new Redbook numbering system
 - Combined Chapters 13 and 14 into one chapter titled “Training, Qualifications and Personnel”.
 - Subsequent Chapters re-numbered (Chapter 14 now becomes “Firefighting Equipment”, Chapter 15, Communications, Chapter 16, Aviation Operations/Resources, Chapter 17, Prescribed Fire, etc.)
- **Chapter 1 – Federal Fire Program Policy and Guidance Overview**
 - Added introduction language to clarify the intent of the FMH, and to summarize the various sources of policy and guidance which impact FWS fire management.
- **Chapter 4 – FWS Program Organization and Responsibilities**
 - Removed Fire Management Branch, Regional and Refuge responsibilities from Chapter 4 because this information is contained in Chapter 4 of the Redbook.
 - Re-inserted appropriate FWS Program Organization and Responsibilities.
 - Included responsibilities of the NFLT from NFLT charter
- **Chapter 9 – Planning**
 - Updated Chapter 9 to include the new Interagency FMP template and FWS guidance for using the template.
 - Updated to include the FWS NEPA Checklist.
 - Clarifies 5 year FMP update responsibilities.
- **Chapter 10 – Preparedness**
 - Updated Chapter 10 in order to remove duplicate guidance covered in the Redbook.
 - Incorporated appropriate portions of the old FWS Trespass Handbook.
- **Chapter 11 – Incident Management**
 - Updated Chapter 10 in order to remove duplicate guidance covered in the Redbook.
 - Updated Chapter 11 to reflect the latest Post Fire Activities reporting guidance.
- **Chapter 13 – Training, Qualifications and Personnel**

- Updated guidance on the use of the RXCM position as approved by the NFLT. Changes include the process and form to be used in requesting approval to use the RXCM on prescribed fires.
 - Clarified the RXCM position qualifications.
 - Updated to reflect change in RXB3 language concerning limitations to the use of the position, referencing the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Reference Guide.
 - Updated to reflect revised qualification standards for agency determined positions (Engine Operator, Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 3, Incident Commander Type 5, Faller Class A/B/C, and Prescribed Fire Crew Member).
 - Changed language concerning fallers and tree sizes to read ‘ “A” positions can fell trees up to 8 inches DBH, “B” positions can fell trees up to 24 inches DBH, and “C” positions have no size limit on tree size’, removing the arbitrary reference to tree sizes.
- **Chapter 17, Prescribed Fire**
 - Updated to clarify new guidance from the Redbook and the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Reference Guide.
 - Updated to reflect revised Service guidance for prescribed fire planning and implementation on private lands through the Service’s private lands programs.
- **Chapter 18, Reviews and Investigations**
 - Deleted Service specific fire review and investigation guidance because it duplicated the guidance found in Chapter 19 of the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook.